United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General presents report to Security Council on United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) to be sent to demilitarized zone between the two countries.

- Iraq notifies United Nations of its acceptance of Security Council resolution 687 on permanent cease-fire.

- Committee on Natural Resources concludes twelfth session by approving seven more draft resolutions and two draft decisions to be approved by Economic and Social Council.

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The Security Council held consultations this evening during which it considered a report by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on the establishment of a United Nations Observation Mission to monitor the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait.

In a resolution adopted by the Council last Wednesday setting conditions for a formal cease-fire in the Gulf conflict, the Secretary-General was requested to make the necessary plans for such an operation, to be known as the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM).

In his report, the Secretary-General said that for UNIKOM to be effective, it must have at all times its confidence and backing of the Council. It would have to be given the necessary cooperation of the parties, and would have to function as an integrated and efficient military unit. Adequate financial arrangements would have to be made to cover its costs.

The purpose of the mission would be "to monitor the Khor Abdullah and a demilitarized zone extending 10 kilometres into Iraq and 5 kilometres into Kuwait", based on borders established between the two countries, under a 1963 agreement. The demilitarizated zone is about 200 kilomtres long, the Khor Abdullah, about 40 kilometres.

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The Secretary-General recommends an initial group of 300 military observers, supported by five infantry companies drawn from existing peacekeeping operations in the region. With other units, the maximum initial strength of UNIKOM would be 1,440 all ranks.

The Secretary-General reported that the cost of the start-up and first six months of the operation were estimated at some $83 million. The cost of continuing UNIKOM for the following six months would be about $40 million. The Security Council consultations on the Secretary-General's report will continue tomorrow.

Replying to questions from news correspondents, the Secretary-General commented this morning on the deployment of UNIKOM. He said he hoped the Security Council would decide to dispatch the force as soon as possible on the basis of his recommendations. He said he expected that it would be made up of representatives of the Council's five permanent members -- China, France, the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom -- together with other countries from different regions.

With regard to the problem of Iraqi refugees currently gathering on Iran's and Turkey's borders, the Secretary-General said that the proposal by the Turkish President to create "a United Nations area" within Iraq would raise the problem of sovereignty and would be complicated.

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Iraq has formally notified the United Nations of its acceptance of Security Council resolution 687 which set the terms for a permanent cease-fire to end the conflict in the Persian Gulf. Among other things, that resolution called on Iraq to accept a 1963 border agreement with Kuwait, to agree to compensate Kuwait for the damage it caused during the invasion and occupation, and to destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

In a letter dated 6 April to the Secretary-General and President of the Security Council, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein said that although his Government viewed the resolution as unfair and biased, it had no choice but to accept it. He said a "good number" of the provisions of the resolution "impaired Iraq's sovereignty"; the resolution "constituted an unprecedented assault on ... sovereignty, and the rights that stem therefrom, embodied in the Charter and in international law and practice".

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The United Nations Committee on Natural Resources ended its latest session, on Friday, by approving seven more draft resolutions and two draft decisions which will go to the Economic and Social Council for action later this year.

During its nine-day biennial session, the Committee gave priority consideration to issues concerned with energy resources. Members of the Committee discussed, among other things, the pressing need for achieving

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sustainable development, environmental concerns affecting the exploitation of natural resources and the responsibility of developed countries to share technology, funds and human resources with developing countries.

Speakers stressed that the war in the Gulf region had highlighted the need for increased attention to energy issues and called for more efficient use of energy.

In the debate on water resources, Committee members drew attention to the increasing use of water as a political tool in the Gulf region. The failure of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) to achieve its aims was also stressed.

In a concluding statement, the Chairman, Francis Eric Aguilar-Hecht (Guatemala), said that while the issues before the Committee were attracting increasing interest, the Committee itself was receiving decreasing attention. He hoped the present spirit of cooperation and renewal would help the Committee overcome that trend.

The Committee was created in 1970 by the Economic and Social Council to deal with issues regarding the exploration, development and management of energy, mineral and water resources. It meets every two years and will convene again in 1993 in New York.

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